

Message Text

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ACTION EA-13

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BANGKOK FOR RED

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SUBJECT: PROPOSALS FOR BURMESE-US SCIENTIFIC COOPERATION

REF: (A) STATE 53122; (B) STATE 67041

1. SUMMARY. EMBASSY REGARDS TWO OF FOUR CRO PROJECTS AS OUT OF QUESTION ON GROUNDS OF COST. HOWEVER, WE BELIEVE ESSENTIAL OILS PROJECT IS SOUND AND MEETS RED/EARP STANDARDS OF REGIONAL APPLICABILITY. INSTRUMENT RESEARCH PROJECT ALSO SEEMS TO US POTENTIALLY SUITABLE IF PARED DOWN TO LESS AMBITIOUS SCHEME. END SUMMARY.

2. REF A REQUESTED EMBASSY COMMENTS ON FOUR PROPOSALS OF GUB CENTRAL RESEARCH ORGANIZATION FOR POSSIBLE RED/EARP FUNDING. WITHOUT EMBARKING ON DETAILED TECHNICAL ANALYSIS, OUR VIEWS ON EACH OF THE FOUR ARE AS FOLLOWS:

(A) SMALL-SCALE MICRO HYDRO STATIONS. AS IT STANDS, THIS PROPOSAL IS AID RATHER THAN RESEARCH-ORIENTED AND WHILE MERITORIOUS

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IT IS WELL IN EXCESS OF AMOUNT WHICH EARP COULD BE EXPECTED FUND.

WE DO NOT EXPECT PURSUE IT FURTHER WITH GUB.

(B) PILOT PLANT FOR TROPICAL HARDWOOD PULPING. THERE IS DIS-AGREEMENT OVER NEED FOR PILOT PLANT RESEARCH ON THIS SUBJECT. IF SUCH RESEARCH IS APPROPRIATE, CRO WOULD BE SUITABLE LOCATION AND RESULTS WOULD BE OF GENERAL INTEREST. NEVERTHELESS, FUNDING INVOLVED IS SO FAR IN EXCESS OF WHAT EARP COULD PROVIDE THAT WE DO NOT INTAJD PURSUE FURTHER.

(C) ESSENTIAL OILS RESEARCH. SUBJECT TO FURTHER REFINEMENT OF TYPES OF EQUIPMENT NEEDED AND SPECIFIC OILS TO BE STUDIED, WE BELIEVE THIS A WORTHWHILE EXTENSION AND ENLARGEMENT OF RESEARCH PROGRAM ALREADY UNDER WAY AT CRO. RESULTS WOULD BE OF OBVIOUS APPLICABILITY TO PROBLEM OF CROP SUBSTITUTION FOR POPPY ACREAGE, AS WELL AS TO MORE GENERAL PROBLEM OF IMPROVING LIVING STANDARDS IN MANY REMOTE AREAS OF SE ASIA WHERE DIFFICULT TERRAIN AND LACK OF TRANSPORT FACILITIES HAMPER EXPANSION OF CASH-CROP FARMING.

(D) INSTRUMENT RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT. PENDING DISCUSSION WITH RONKIN WE HAVE REACHED NO DEFINITE CONCLUSIONS ON MERITS THIS PROJECT OR DEGREE TO WHICH IT REPRESENTS RESEARCH RATHER THAN OUTRIGHT AID. AS IT STANDS, PROJECT EXCEEDS ANYTHING EARP COULD FUND, BUT IT COULD PERHAPS BE DIVIDED INTO SEVERAL SMALLER PROJECTS WHICH WOULD BE OF INTEREST.

3. PROJECTS WERE PREPARED SPECIFICALLY FOR SUBMISSION TO RED/EARP, THOUGH GUB WOULD OF COURSE FEEL FREE TO SUBMIT ALSO TO OTHER PROSPECTIVE COOPERATORS OR DONORS. IN TURNING PROPOSALS OVER TO US, CHAIRMAN OF CRO EMPHASIZED THAT THESE ARE IN THE NATURE OF DRAFTS, PREPARED ALONG THE LINES OF PROJECT SUBMISSIONS MOST FAMILIAR TO CRO PERSONNEL, NAMELY PROJECT PROPOSALS TO UN AND SPECIALIZED AGENCIES. HE RECOGNIZED THAT FOR AGREEMENT ON RESEARCH PROPOSALS WITH RED/EARP OR OTHER USG AGENCIES DETAILS OF PROSPECTUS WOULD DIFFER CONSIDERABLY. IT HAS ALSO BEEN CLEAR THROUGHOUT THAT USG WAS NOT EXPECTED TO FUND ALL FOUR PROJECTS, BUT TO CHOOSE THOSE MOST CONSISTENT WITH OBJECTIVES OF EARP (OR OTHER SOURCE OF FUNDS).

4. WE DO NOT UNDERSTAND VIEW EXPRESSED REF B THAT CRO-PROPOSED PROJECTS DO NOT HAVE "CLEAR REGIONAL APPLICABILITY." ALL FOUR, INCLUDING THOSE WHICH FOR OTHER REASONS ARE PROBABLY NOT FEASIBLE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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FOR EARP SUPPORT, ARE ADDRESSED TO PROBJEMS WHICH BURMA SHARES WITH SOME OR ALL OTHER SEA COUNTRIES, AND RESULTS OF ALL FOUR--NOTABLY ESSENTIAL OILS AND R AND D ON LOCALLY PRODUCED SCIENTIFIC APPARATUS--WOULD BE OF IMMEDIATE RELEVANCE TO OTHER COUNTRIES. WE NOTE THAT APPROVED EARP PROJECTS INCLUDE SUCH ITEMS AS LAO LANGUAGE CURRICULUM STUDY, INDONESIA MIGRATION STUDY, REFORM OF THE VIETNAMESE BACCALAUREAT II EXAMINATION, AND OTHER TOPICS WHOSE REGIONAL APPLICABILITY IS MUCH LESS CLEAR TO US.

5. NOR ARE WE CLEAR ON WHAT "SPECIAL QUALIFICATIONS" ARE REQUIRED OF BURMA. SUBJECT TO FURTHER STUDY OF THE PROPOSALS BY SPECIALISTS IN RELEVANT FIELDS, CRO APPEARS BE WELL QUALIFIED INSTITUTIONALLY (AND ITS PERSONNEL INDIVIDUALLY) TO WORK ON THE PROJECTS PROPOSED, WITH THE POSSIBLE EXCEPTION OF THE MICRO HYDRO STATIONS PROPOSALS.

6. FYI IN ADDITION TO THE FOUR PROPOSALS GIVEN US BY CRO WE HAVE SUGGESTED THAT IT CONSIDER RESEARCH ON UTILIZATION OF TEAK SAWDUST AND MILLING WASTE, WITH SPECIFIC REFERENCE TO LARGE AMOUNTS OF WASTE WHICH WILL BE PRODUCED BY AID-FINANCED OKKYIN TEAK MILL. CRO EXPRESSED INTEREST IN THIS SUBJECT AND AFTER PRELIMINARY STUDY DEVELOPED TWO POSSIBLE USES OF WASTE REQUIRING FURTHER RESEARCH: (A) PHENOL PRODUCTION AND (B) PRESSBOARD PRODUCTION. CRO IS REFINING ONE OR BOTH OF THESE SUBJECTS FOR CONSIDERATION BY EARP OR OTHER APPROPRIATE USG SOURCE OF RESEARCH FUNDING.
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